

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, March 1, 2002

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SECRETARY THOMPSON HAILS 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE OLDER AMERICANS ACT NUTRITION PROGRAM

Calling it the one of the most successful community-based programs for seniors in America, HHS Secretary Tommy G. Thompson today renewed his commitment to the Older Americans Act (OAA) Nutrition Program and launched its 30th anniversary celebration.

“If the Older Americans Act Nutrition Program was a restaurant, the sign out front would say, ‘Six billion served,’ ” Secretary Thompson said. “For 30 years, this program not only has provided nutritious, healthy meals to older Americans, but also has touched their lives by linking them to community services that allow them to remain independent.”

Secretary Thompson and Assistant Secretary for Aging Josefina G. Carbonell began the program’s 30th anniversary celebration at a listening session in Denver. The session gives seniors, family caregivers and service providers an opportunity to share their ideas for improving programs and services provided through the OAA with top HHS officials.

Older Americans are living longer, healthier lives, in part due to the improved nutrition provided through the OAA Nutrition Program. Administered by HHS’ Administration on Aging (AoA), the program provides meals served in senior centers and other group settings and meals delivered to frail, homebound elders (commonly known as “meals on wheels”).

Through a strong national partnership with state and area agencies on aging, tribal organizations, nutrition service providers, thousands of dedicated volunteers, caregivers and the private sector, the program also provides nutrition screening, education and counseling, and a vast array of other supportive and health services. It supports federal, state and local efforts to fight chronic health conditions among the elderly such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease. The program effectively addresses weight management issues such as malnutrition and obesity, and it helps to manage depression that affects millions of older persons in our country today.

“The OAA Nutrition Program is a proven success story. It effectively targets older adults who are poorer, more likely to live alone, and are at higher nutritional risk,” said Assistant Secretary Carbonell, who previously ran South Florida’s largest senior nutrition program. “Just as important, the program saves our nation billions of dollars in health care costs. For example, the cost of a one-year supply of home-delivered meals equals about the cost of one day in the hospital.”

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President Bush's fiscal year 2003 budget request calls for \$745 million for the OAA Nutrition Program, which includes an increase of \$2 million for home-delivered meals, and \$150 million in funds previously appropriated to the Department of Agriculture.

In fiscal year 1999, the OAA Nutrition Program provided 112.8 million meals to 1.8 million older adults in group settings ("congregate meals") and 134.6 million meals were delivered to 884,000 homebound older persons. AoA also funds nutrition and supportive services for Native American elders. In fiscal year 1999, 1.7 million meals were served to nearly 23,000 older American Indians, Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiians in group settings and 1.3 million meals were delivered to 35,707 Native American homebound elders.

AoA last month released each state's fiscal year 2002 allocation to support OAA nutrition programs, including both congregate and home-delivered meals. A list of each state's allocation follows. More information on the OAA nutrition program can be found at <http://www.aoa.gov/nutrition/>.

	Congregate Meals	Home Delivered Meals
Alabama	\$6,075,649	\$2,808,121
Alaska	1,930,500	873,675
Arizona	6,516,525	3,201,542
Arkansas	4,168,532	1,792,404
California	35,207,166	17,298,163
Colorado	4,162,189	2,044,988
Connecticut	5,247,706	2,195,180
Delaware	1,930,500	873,675
Dist. of Columbia	1,930,500	873,675
Florida	26,317,912	12,930,649
Georgia	7,951,439	3,906,741
Hawaii	1,942,912	873,675
Idaho	1,933,101	873,675
Illinois	17,307,167	7,159,675
Indiana	8,115,532	3,605,554
Iowa	5,087,564	2,022,793
Kansas	4,094,783	1,659,008
Kentucky	5,576,899	2,454,406
Louisiana	5,652,735	2,506,605
Maine	1,998,535	873,675
Maryland	5,946,697	2,921,761
Massachusetts	9,791,936	3,999,704
Michigan	12,941,922	5,821,966
Minnesota	6,406,074	2,816,867
Mississippi	3,895,756	1,667,423
Missouri	8,477,150	3,588,039
Montana	1,930,500	873,675

Nebraska	2,742,069	1,080,204
Nevada	2,257,350	1,109,092
New Hampshire	1,934,983	873,675
New Jersey	12,205,033	5,266,163
New Mexico	2,068,576	1,016,343
New York	28,998,414	11,687,727
North Carolina	9,595,601	4,714,559
North Dakota	1,930,500	873,675
Ohio	16,413,345	7,161,783
Oklahoma	5,086,798	2,185,131
Oregon	4,307,082	2,077,447
Pennsylvania	21,305,106	8,866,367
Rhode Island	1,952,511	873,675
South Carolina	4,836,445	2,376,266
South Dakota	1,930,500	873,675
Tennessee	7,162,654	3,438,186
Texas	20,594,997	10,118,838
Utah	1,965,126	917,947
Vermont	1,930,500	873,675
Virginia	7,910,029	3,886,395
Washington	6,482,596	3,185,062
West Virginia	3,309,891	1,323,287
Wisconsin	7,596,046	3,310,276
Wyoming	1,930,500	873,675
American Samoa	595,552	135,346
Guam	965,250	436,838
Northern Marianas	241,313	109,209
Puerto Rico	4,348,102	2,136,332
Virgin Islands	965,250	436,838
Total	\$390,000,000	\$176,500,000

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Note: All HHS press releases, fact sheets and other press materials are available at www.hhs.gov/news.